

**SUFFOLK COUNTY VANDERBILT MUSEUM
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Minutes

A regular meeting of the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum Board of Trustees was held on **April 19, 2004** in the Planetarium Lobby, Centerport, New York.

The following were in attendance:

Dr. Steven Gittelman – President
Michael Broxmeyer – 1st Vice President
Deborah A. Gray – 2nd Vice President
Carl Luecke – Treasurer
Dr. William Rogers – Trustee
Bertram E. Seides – Trustee
William Macchione – Trustee
J. Lance Mallamo – Executive Director
Leslie Tannen – Todd Shapiro & Associates
Ann Marie Pastore – Stenographer

Absent:

Dr. Anthony Pecorale – Trustee

Excused Absence:

Susan LeBow – Trustee
Mary Ann Jedrlinic – Trustee
Marjorie Fuhrmann – Secretary

(Dr. Steven Gittelman called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m.)

DR. GITTELMAN:

This is a regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum. Do we have a list of guests?

MS. PASTORE:

Yes.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Thank you for joining us. We have a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting. I did speak to Marge and she said she had reviewed them, and there were no changes that she had to recommend.

MR. MACCHIONE:

I'll make the motion.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Is there a second?

MR. LUECKE:

Second.

DR. GITTELMAN:

All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **The motion carries unanimously. (Vote: 7/0/0/7 Absent: Ms. Fuhrmann, Dr. Pecorale, Ms. Jedrlinic & Ms. LeBow. Three vacant positions.)**

Public Relations' Report.

MR. MALLAMO:

Steve, can I just make a note for the record that we have two excused absences, Susan LeBow and Maryann Jedrlinic. I have the paperwork for Susan LeBow to give to the stenographer.

MR. SEIDES:

If I could just say that I did speak to Susan. Her operation was successful, and she's recuperating at home. She's looking forward to coming back to the board.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Thank you.

MS. TANNEN:

If you don't mind, I'd like to focus tonight on updating you on things that have occurred since we last met regarding the 2004 Cup Race. We met recently with Jon Cooper, Steve, Lance, Todd and myself because Steve had a number of wonderful suggestions regarding activities to occur in Suffolk County. Jon is going to be following up on those suggestions, and hopefully they will be happening.

We also met with the Nassau County Commissioner of Parks, Maureen Banks. I believe the last time we got together we were telling you that the competitive event will be occurring in Garden City. We met with the Garden City officials. It's not going to be occurring in Garden City. We are hoping it will be occurring in Eisenhower Park. That's very, very historically accurate and very appropriate. Hopefully that's where the competitive event will occur in Nassau County.

We also met with Len Rothberg of ECG. He is going to be pursuing the sponsorships. If you don't mind, I'll just quickly redo the list of organizations that he's approached: Armitron, Commerce Bank, David Learner Associates, Dell Laboratories, Enteck Power Services, George Gerrard Associates, GMAC Financial, HSBC Bank, Jaguar, Key Span, King Kullen, LIPA, Light Path, London Jewelers, Marchon Eyewear, Mercedes, Michelin, Minolta, Nixon Peabody, North Fork Bank, Rally Group, Rolex, Symbol Technologies, Holst, Rubenstein, TD Waterhouse, Northrop.

He has specially approached Commerce Bank and North Fork for the Grand Marshall sponsorships, which are \$25,000 sponsorships. He has also made it known that there are three other levels of sponsorship available, and these are Grand Prix for \$12,500, Pace Car for \$7,500, and supporting sponsorship for \$2,500.

At this point, he has made the initial inquiries. He has called people. He has e-mailed. He has voice-mailed. He has had conversations, and he is waiting for people to get back to him.

That's where we stand at the moment. Did I forget anything, Lance? Does anybody have any questions?

MS. PASTORE:

Do you have a copy of that list?

MR. MALLAMO:

We can get you one.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I thought I would mention one of the ideas that we are kicking around because we're going to be mentioning it tomorrow at the meeting. I wanted to get some feedback. Mr. Vanderbilt had the Motor Parkway and it had tollbooths. At each tollbooth you paid a toll to get access. We want to reverse the process and say, like on a walk-a-thon, you could go around to a tollbooth, which could be located in 20 places in Suffolk County, only it's a motor-thon. An antique car can be sponsored by a not-for-profit group, any not-for-profit group. For example, an historic house out east could sponsor an antique car and go out and get members to agree to pay – depending on how many tollbooths they went to.

This would be a situation where we would sell sponsorships to the various tollbooths and we would sell sponsorships for autos that were involved in driving on behalf of the Vanderbilt but for example a hospital could also sponsor its

own cars and use it as their own fundraiser. We would make the Vanderbilt Cup Race more of a Vanderbilt Charity Race that supports all charities throughout the island and throughout Suffolk County, not limited to the Vanderbilt. We would organize it and allow other charities to benefit from it by sponsoring their own vehicles and their own drivers. There could be multiple sponsors on cars.

I think we have many – or we will find out tomorrow – if we have many, say, pre-1931 antique vehicles that would be willing to go willy-nilly around the County picking up toll coupons at 20 places, all of them strategically covered to make sure that the entire County is covered.

I thought I would throw it out. It's not specifically for the Vanderbilt. It's for all charities. Any charity can participate. What's wonderful is that if you have a charity or a group that you want to raise money for, your cost for doing so would only be to register the car with us, then you send the car around, and then you hand in your envelope with your coupon, and we send you a certificate that says, you have gone through 11 tollbooths at the Vanderbilt. If you went through all 20, you come up to the museum, and we'll give you a Vanderbilt Cup. I think we would be very well received. I think we would get a lot of coverage. Jon Cooper seemed to like it very much. What do you think?

MR. BROXMEYER:

It sounds like a great idea.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I think we could get local Legislators perhaps who could work with us in their districts. I think there are a lot of people and groups that would not only sponsor a car but might sponsor a tollbooth. A tollbooth doesn't have to be a fancy affair. It could be a chair and envelope for the day. Or it could be a big arch and a big thing. It could be in front of –

MR. SEIDES:

An historic building.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Yes, and of course I was hoping – and Lance did volunteer this – that he would approach the historic buildings and other museums all across the County, and we'll all do this together. This is something where I think the Vanderbilt Cup brought Long Island attention, and now the Vanderbilt Charity Cup could be the day we celebrate charities in general. It could be breast cancer. It could be anything you want, just find a car, and one car can be sponsored by ten different charities and cheer them on. I'm sure we could get radio coverage and TV coverage. It would be a very nice way of celebrating the anniversary. Any thoughts?

MR. SEIDES:

Good idea. Would this occur in one day or over several days?

DR. GITTELMAN:

I'm thinking one day.

MR. SEIDES:

One day, okay.

DR. GITTELMAN:

And you don't go to the museum to start. You go to your nearest tollbooth to start. Then everybody could start when they get to the tollbooth, and they pick up their first toll coupon at Smithtown, St. James, or Setauket, or Stony Brook, Huntington. They can all start in different places, and then they get a map, an envelope, and they go around. They could have all their sponsors on it. They could even have celebrity passengers who could also get pledges just because they are riding in the car. Each charity – I spoke to a couple of charities, and they were very enthusiastic. They liked the idea of the partnership.

MR. SEIDES:

It sounds like an easy participation for a lot of people.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Yes, for a lot of people.

MR. SEIDES:

Does the route have to be all over the island because some of the old cars aren't going to make it? If they're in their own area, they could do it.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I know for example, my Model T will make one tollbooth. It's not fair to put it on a flat bed and drive it around. What we were thinking of was all over Suffolk County and the debate will rage tomorrow as to whether or not just in Suffolk and part of Nassau as well. I personally feel it should include part of Nassau as well. Let's face it, we're all on an island together. It's an idea. We haven't taken it past the point of just talking to a few people. I wanted to come up with something that was in Suffolk County, special for Suffolk County because we have our cocktail party in Garden City, and I thought we needed balance.

That would take us to the Vanderbilt Cup events and gala, Michael.

MR. BROXMEYER:

I could just mention that we did have the Development meeting prior to this meeting. We met with Len Rothberg, as Leslie mentioned, for about 15 minutes. He updated us on the status of some of the sponsorships he's trying to sell. He discussed a lot of the planning for the event and ticket sales and putting that together. Lance was able to acquire a fundraising software package at no charge, which is great. Wendy is going to be updating that and putting lists together so we can give that to the board very soon and start working on selling tickets and sponsorships. That's all I have to report.

MR. MALLAMO:

We're also working on getting raffle prizes for the event. We're going to give everyone a letter that we have produced. If you're having dinner someplace and they look like they'd be willing to sponsor a raffle prize, try to make that connection. If we start earlier, we can get many more prizes than we had last year and really get some great packages together.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Dinosaur Committee -- Ed Hahn, by the way, is a hold-over, and he has informed us that his term expired last year. He has decided not to renew. I have not received a letter, but this is an oral communication.

MR. MALLAMO:

Ed had contacted me today and just indicated that he said his business is just precluding him from really spending a lot of time here this year. With great regret, he said that he would not be looking to renew. I'm sure he will be missed.

I will give a report for the Dinosaur Committee that we appear to have resolved all the outstanding issues with upgrading the building. We have gotten the building permit from the Department of Public Works and identified the contractors who are the low bidders, so we'll be starting that work hopefully later this week.

The construction will last about ten to fourteen days, and then we'll be getting the insulation and the HVAC system installed. We're still looking at an opening date of June. That's the Dinosaur Report.

There was no Education and Exhibits Committee meeting this month, so that will be delayed until the next meeting.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Finance Committee, Carl.

MR. LUECKE:

The Finance Committee met early this evening, and we chatted about various topics. I'm just going to bring to the board's attention and to make sure that everybody has in their folder a spreadsheet of the budgets by month and the actual by month.

I'm happy to point out that in February the admissions were greater than anticipated. We're hoping that the same will be true for March.

Other than that, there are no issues at this time to bring to the board.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Any questions? Personnel Committee, Deborah.

MS. GARY:

Yes, the Personnel Committee met twice. At our first meeting, we reviewed the salary and benefit structure against a survey that Lance had provided to us. We found that our salaries are below the median and that our benefits are probably at the median, so combined we're a little low.

We also discussed the implementation of the personnel evaluations. If you recall, the Personnel Committee spent a lot of time looking at various changes to the Personnel Manual and changes to the evaluation process. As a result of our restructuring that follow-up after that and after the assignment of new responsibilities to certain individuals, an evaluation could be conducted of each employee in the museum with some part being a self-evaluation and some part being an evaluation by the supervisor. I would ask Lance to comment on it, because I think it went very favorably.

MR. MALLAMO:

Yes, that process worked extremely well. I think the employees appreciated the opportunity to provide a self-evaluation to discuss the issues from their perspective and felt that they definitely had input into the process. We are just completing meetings with everyone. It's my goal to meet with each and every employee that we have here to go over their review. All of them haven't been completed but a good majority have. We have reviewed the salaries, and we will have made some recommendations for merit increases for certain employees that are well within the budget for this budget. We think we should be able to handle this.

MS. GARY:

We also discussed the search for our Assistant Museum Director and development person, which Lance is going to do as part of the American Association of Museums' annual meeting, if that didn't already occur.

MR. MALLAMO:

Yes, we have taken out an advertisement in the AVISO Publication, which will also be on their website. I will be posting that at the annual meeting in New Orleans that is in approximately three weeks. We will be able to interview right there.

MS. GRAY:

At the second meeting, we discussed the employee benefits. We're going to do a study over the summer to look at how our benefits stack up against some of the other museums in the survey that we received and also to see if there are ways that we can assist in looking at the budget for next year. That's the end of our report.

MR. BROXMEYER:

Can I ask a question?

DR. GITTELMAN:

Yes, Michael.

MR. BROXMEYER:

Was there a job description put together for the Assistant Director?

MR. MALLAMO:

Yes.

MS. GRAY:

Yes.

MR. MALLAMO:

We have that.

MR. BROXMEYER:

Do you have a brief explanation of what they're going to do? Are they going to do development?

MR. MALLAMO:

The development function is a part of that description. We have included the requirements of the County, that they

have three years experience in an AAM museum.

MR. BROXMEYER:

Is there a budget for the salary?

MS. GRAY:

It was in the budget.

MR. MALLAMO:

Yes, that salary was included.

MR. BROXMEYER:

How much were you budgeting to spend?

MS. GRAY:

I don't have that with me.

MR. MALLAMO:

I think it was in the mid-eighties.

MS. GRAY:

I think it was eighty-five.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I would like to see a copy of the survey.

MR. MALLAMO:

Sure.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Anything else on that report?

MS. GRAY:

No.

MR. MALLAMO:

Actually they're doing a new survey now. The survey we used was a 2002/2003 survey, which we're also a little below. I just got an update on it too to provide our information for that for the current year.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Okay, Director's Report.

MR. MALLAMO:

We have been working very hard to finish up a number of capital projects. The air conditioning system in the mansion has been installed. I'm thrilled that they'll be working for the summer because usually I would assume it would be done in January, but it has been all installed. I don't know if all of the connections have been made. That was the last remaining factor of the HVAC project.

The grounds' crew has been working diligently to affect a complete repainting of all of the areas that were infiltrated by the plumbing, the electrical and HVAC projects. The whole basement has been repainted anticipating that the AAM Accreditation Committee will be coming at some point during this year. We wanted that to look as good as it did the last time we were accredited. That's been underway.

We reviewed the plans last week for the new bathrooms that are going to be installed down on the lower level. That's going out to bid very shortly. That will be a big improvement with the facility.

We're developing the new Living History Program for the summer. Staff is working on that. We're working with the guides to develop that program and getting input from them.

Stephanie Gress is also working on a rehabilitation of the dinosaur exhibit to replace some of the outdated equipment that we have had in there with more contemporary interpretation so that when that opens in June, it's much fresher than it was.

We are working hard on the Vanderbilt Cup. We hope that that's going to be a major event for their year.

MR. SEIDES:

Just a question on the new bathroom proposal, will they be handicapped accessible?

MR. MALLAMO:

These will be handicapped accessible. What we're doing on the lower level is we currently have four -- two tiny bathrooms that are not accessible and then two other bathrooms that really functioned as locker rooms. The proposal is that that entire space will be developed into two large bathrooms. The walls will be built within the walls of the existing so that we can keep the perimeter tiled wherever we can as an historic resource, if someone wants to put this back at some point. But within that, we'll be able to develop a men's and ladies' room with at least four stalls in each one. Currently we only have one stall in each of these. They will also be handicapped accessible, have baby changing stations, and a make-up area for ladies. This will be a major improvement not only for the public but for our site use events that occur.

MR. SEIDES:

Good, thank you.

MR. MALLAMO:

They will be direct access from that area to the rear gardens, which we have never had. So this should really bring us into the 21st century with our plumbing.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I guess it's up to me. I have been having a terrific time. I have been reading my stuffings out. I have had so much fun reading about this family, the parents, the grandparents, and the great-grandparents. In fifteen years that I have been here, I never really focused on the family and on Willie K. I find that there is almost nothing written on our Willie K. Yet there is everything written on him, in the sense that there are newspaper articles, and he has his own journals. Boy, what a soap opera. They are a riot. What a crowd. I was telling Bill on the way over, and he couldn't shut me up. I kept telling him one story after the next about -- you're not going to believe this one. You have to hear that one. They're really, really something. They are quite a family.

I have been writing -- I wouldn't call it a book -- but whatever it is, the accompanying manual for the Vanderbilt event. I have the books stacked up this high that I have read on the fireplace and the other stack is dwindling. It's been really a lot of fun. I'm really enjoying it. It puts things in perspective that I just never had here.

I urge you all, when I finish writing my thing, if it's at all readable, you might want to read some other things. What a crowd. They were not dull people. Our Willie K., he was not a dull boy. Trust me. He was something else. It's fun and I'm enjoying it.

I have nothing else to add except, what's our next meeting date?

MR. MALLAMO:

May 20th?

DR. GITTELMAN:

My brother's birthday.

MR. MALLAMO:

It's a Thursday.

DR. ROGERS:

That's graduation, commencement day at a lot of the universities.

MR. MALLAMO:

A particular university or –

DR. ROGERS:

I know New York Tech, where I am involved, the dates are the 20th, 21st, etc. I don't know exactly what time.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I'm trying to figure out who has conflicts –

MR. MALLAMO:

That was the one that we had conflicts all over the place.

DR. GITTELMAN:

All over the horizon. Is there another day that would be acceptable to everybody? Can we auction this one here?

MR. LUECKE:

I'm okay the whole week.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Then we'll have it the whole week.

MS. GRAY:

Was it originally the 19th?

DR. GITTELMAN:

That's my birthday; give me a break.

MR. MALLAMO:

That's a Wednesday, and, Bill, you have a conflict with Wednesdays.

MR. MACCHIONE:

The second Wednesday of the month.

MR. MALLAMO:

The second Wednesday.

DR. GITTELMAN:

So you have a conflict every second Wednesday.

MR. MACCHIONE:

That's it.

MR. SEIDES:

I have a conflict with every second Tuesday.

MR. MALLAMO:

I know we had your birthday here once before, didn't we? We got you a cake.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Is that the way you want me to do it, guys? May 19th, is that what you want?

MS. GRAY:

I think you better check and see other people's availability because as I recall, this May month was very difficult.

MR. MALLAMO:

I think Marjorie had a problem with May 19th.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I protested May 19th. I didn't want the 20th either, but that's okay.

MS. GRAY:

What's the 21st?

DR. ROGERS:

Do we have to meet in May? Can we meet early June?

DR. GITTELMAN:

We have a lot of things going on now.

MR. LUECKE:

Because of that Vanderbilt Cup, there may be issues that we should be working on.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Tentatively, what date do you want? Pick a date?

MR. LUECKE:

What about Tuesday, the 18th?

DR. GITTELMAN:

That's fine with me. It's not that I don't want to share my birthday with you guys, if you want to have it May 19th, go ahead.

DR. ROGERS:

What day is your birthday?

MR. BROXMEYER:

He just won't be here.

DR. GITTELMAN:

May 19th, Wednesday. I have to be here because I haven't missed a meeting yet.

MR. MALLAMO:

The only problem I see is that I know that there were problems with other people and they may not be here tonight.

MR. LUECKE:

Originally it was 13th, correct? Then it was changed to the 19th and then to the 20th.

DR. GITTELMAN:

The moving meeting.

DR. ROGERS:

I think tentatively I would be okay the 18th or the 19th.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Does anybody have any problems with either of those two days?

MR. LUECKE:

No.

MR. BROXMEYER:

No.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Let's just e-mail out the 18th and 19th, and have everybody pick a date.

MR. MALLAMO:

Okay.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Okay, any old business?

MS. PASTORE:

Can we try to do the schedule for the rest of the year?

DR. GITTELMAN:

We can't even get past May. We'd like to do that but –

MR. MALLAMO:

Are those dates good for you?

MS. PASTORE:

Those dates are fine.

DR. GITTELMAN:

What about June?

MR. LUECKE:

We have the 16th for June, as far as I know.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Is the 16th of June still good for everybody?

MS. GRAY:

Is that the second Tuesday?

MR. LUECKE:

It's the third Wednesday.

MR. MALLAMO:

Is that okay with you?

MR. MACCHIONE:

Yes, it the second Wednesday that's no good.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Then we're good for the 16th.

MS. GRAY:

I think it's my annual meeting, but I'm not sure. Wasn't it a conflict? I already sent you a note.

MR. MALLAMO:

And I don't have it in front of me.

MS. GRAY:

I'm not suggesting you change it. I just think we need to establish dates and stick with them.

MR. MALLAMO:

I think we had June set. It's July that we don't have set.

MS. PASTORE:

I didn't think we were going to meet in July.

MR. MALLAMO:

That's what we were talking about, not meeting, but we're reserving the option.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I think we were afraid of the date debate. Right now, let's just go through June, which is June 16th.

MR. LUECKE:

So it's June 16th and May to be determined.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Yes, any other business?

MS. PASTORE:

Can't we just do August?

MR. LUECKE:

There is a date set in August.

MR. MALLAMO:

No. If there was, we rescinded it.

MR. LUECKE:

It was August 11th.

MR. MALLAMO:

We have not gone past July. I know that. We had one originally and then we rescinded it.

MR. LUECKE:

August 11th.

MR. MALLAMO:

August 11th? What day is that, Carl?

MR. LUECKE:

That's the second Wednesday.

MR. MACCHIONE:

Basically you had them all the second Wednesday.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Don't take it personally.

MR. MALLAMO:

But a week later is okay?

MR. MACCHIONE:

The day before or the day after is okay, also.

DR. GITTELMAN:

We're talking the third Wednesday –

MR. LUECKE:

We're talking August. It was the 11th, which is the second Wednesday. We're talking about making it the 18th.

MS. GRAY:

I would suggest you send a calendar out to the members and ask them what days of the month are good or bad because you're missing other people who aren't here that are likely to call you tomorrow and tell you the dates are bad.

DR. GITTELMAN:

And the reason they're not here is we keep picking bad dates for them.

MS. GRAY:

Well, you keep switching the dates.

DR. GITTELMAN:

We were trying to be accommodating, that's the problem.

MS. GRAY:

But I think if we could establish a day in the month and stick with it, you'd have better luck at having people rearrange their schedules around that.

MR. MALLAMO:

Can I try that for August?

DR. GITTELMAN:

To do what?

MR. MALLAMO:

To send an e-mail out with dates. So we won't set an August date.

DR. ROGERS:

I think you have to pick the same day every month, a fixed date, and then give everybody an opportunity to swing into it if it's far enough in advance.

MR. MALLAMO:

Well, if we had it the third Wednesday, does that work for everybody here tonight?

MR. BROXMEYER:

The third Wednesday of what month?

MR. MALLAMO:

Every month.

MR. LUECKE:

I believe that's okay.

MR. MACCHIONE:

Yes.

DR. GITTELMAN:

It's fine with me.

MR. MACCHIONE:

Like I said, it's just that second Wednesday that's not good.

DR. GITTELMAN:

But now it's the third Wednesday, which is okay. We have the two months coming up. We're going to try for the third Wednesday in the future, okay, until we get submarined.

MR. MALLAMO:

We have the next two, but we're not sure on May. It was scheduled for the 20th, now we're going to try the 18th or the 19th.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Okay, is there any new business? We have not established a need for an executive session? Can I have a motion to adjourn?

MR. MACCHIONE:

Motion.

DR. ROGERS:

Second.

DR. GITTELMAN:

All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **The motion carries unanimously. (Vote: 7/0/0/7 Absent: Ms. Fuhrmann, Dr. Pecorale, Ms. Jedrlinic & Ms. LeBow. Three vacant positions.)**

There is a meeting tomorrow of the Vanderbilt Cup Committee at one o'clock.

MR. LUECKE:

Across the street.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Yes, across the street. See you then. Thank you.

(Dr. Gittelman adjourned the meeting at 8: 20 p.m.)

SG/ap